

Remarks by Donald C. Winter  
Secretary of the Navy  
Navy SEAL Warrior Fund Dinner  
Waldorf-Astoria Hotel  
New York, New York  
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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I am honored to be here.

All of us gathered here tonight have in common a profound admiration and respect for Navy SEAL's, and we deeply appreciate what they do for our Nation.

We regard SEAL's as men who embody the qualities and the values that we most admire.

Courage.

Absolute dedication to duty.

An attitude that no task is too hard, no mission is impossible.

An awesome level of physical fitness—matched by an equal level of mental toughness.

A willingness to go to any lengths to support one's fellow SEAL's.

A commitment to live according to a very exacting code of honor.

In our minds, SEAL's are the ultimate warriors—a secret weapon that keeps our enemies awake at night.

It is necessary and appropriate that many of their achievements remain undisclosed. Because we choose not to broadcast their successes, most Americans do not know what SEAL's do. And they do not know any details about what our SEAL's endure in combat, or about what heroics individual SEAL's have achieved.

One of the few times that the American people are afforded a glimpse of the achievements of Navy SEAL's is when we give public recognition to those who have earned our Nation's highest awards for combat valor.

On such occasions, Americans learn that there are warriors in our midst whose acts of heroism are so extraordinary that we pause to honor them in public ceremonies, and tell their stories.

Tonight I would like to single out one of those heroes from the community of Navy SEAL's, and I would like to do so for a special reason.

The Michael Monsoor story is already well-known to most of you here.

Raised by loving parents in Garden Grove, in southern California, Michael Monsoor grew up with ambitious dreams.

Those dreams included joining the Navy and becoming a SEAL.

Even as a young boy, Michael showed signs of future greatness.

Underneath his fun-loving ways and his taste for adventure resided a steely determination, tremendous self-discipline, and an intense focus on realizing his dreams.

His parents, his brothers and sister, and a number of influential teachers saw in Michael a kind heart and a noble spirit—someone they were inspired to encourage along whatever path in life he chose.

Michael chose a path open to very few—that of a Navy SEAL.

As a member of our most elite special operations community, Michael Monsoor was sent to Iraq in April of 2006 to engage a dangerous enemy that wore no uniforms and obeyed no rules of war.

From the very start of his tour, Michael's teammates saw that in Michael Monsoor, they were fighting alongside the kind of warrior that comes along rarely in life.

He was no ordinary SEAL, and Michael's conduct stood above the standard of heroism that is routine among our SEAL's.

In the course of multiple operations, Michael exposed himself to heavy enemy fire, heedless of the risks, in order to protect his teammates.

On each occasion, there was Michael—unfazed, a rock of courage and level-headedness in the midst of combat.

Throughout the length of his deployment to Iraq, from April to September, despite having repeatedly come under enemy attack, Michael's low-key demeanor and dry wit were his hallmarks.

He had a mission to accomplish, and nothing could crack his warrior focus.

In May of 2006, Michael earned a Silver Star for his brave actions to save a fallen teammate.

Throughout this action and through numerous firefights during that summer in desert heat, Michael proved time and again that he was the kind of SEAL that enemies most fear.

For his sustained, repeated courage under fire, Michael was awarded a Bronze Star.

Those who served with him will remember him always as a consummate professional who faced terrorist enemies with aplomb and stoicism.

The full extent of Michael's courage, gallantry, and self-less heroism were revealed on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, in Ramadi.

On that day, Michael and his SEAL teammates took a rooftop position in an enemy neighborhood.

When his team was surprised by an enemy grenade, Michael could have escaped and saved himself.

He alone had a clear path to safety.

But he chose a different path—a path of honor that embodies the way of a Navy SEAL.

For having chosen that path, Petty Officer Michael Monsoor joined the ranks of those who have earned our Nation's highest distinction—the Medal of Honor.

He will be honored in history as one of our greatest heroes.

But his achievements will be given even greater prominence and recognition because tonight it is my pleasure to announce that DDG 1001—the second ship in our newest class of destroyers—will be named after Michael Monsoor.

Michael Monsoor's name will now be linked with one of our Nation's most visible examples of military power—a U.S. Navy warship.

His legacy will inspire the hearts of all who serve in the ship that bears his name.

I am pleased that Michael's mother, Sally Monsoor, is with us here tonight, and I would like to thank her for having graciously accepted our invitation to be the ship's sponsor.

In that role, she will carry on the spirit of the ship's namesake, and lend her moral support to the crewmembers and family of the ship, wherever she sails.

May God bless Michael Monsoor, his family, his fellow SEAL's, and all those who will have the honor of serving on USS MICHAEL MONSOOR.

And may God continue to bless America.

Thank you.